

Emergency Conservation Program

Overview

USDA Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) provides emergency funding and technical assistance for farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought. Funding for ECP is appropriated by Congress.

Program Administration

ECP is administered by state and county FSA committees. Subject to availability of funds, locally-elected county committees are authorized to implement ECP for all disasters except drought, which is authorized at the national office of FSA.

Land Eligibility

County FSA committees determine land eligibility based on on-site inspections of damage, taking into account the type and extent of damage. For land to be eligible, the natural disaster must create new conservation problems that, if untreated, would:

- impair or endanger the land;
- materially affect the land's productive capacity;
- represent unusual damage which, except for wind erosion, is not the type likely to recur frequently in the same area; and
- be so costly to repair that Federal assistance is or will be required to return the land to productive agricultural use.

Conservation problems existing prior to the applicable disaster are ineligible for ECP assistance.

Payments

ECP program participants receive cost-share assistance of up to 75 percent of the cost to implement approved emergency conservation practices, as determined by county FSA committees.

Individual or cumulative requests for cost-sharing of \$50,000 or less per person, per disaster are approved at the county committee level. Cost-sharing from \$50,001 to \$100,000 is approved at the state committee level. Cost-sharing over \$100,000 must be approved by FSA's national office.

Technical assistance may be provided by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Emergency Conservation Practices

To rehabilitate farmland, ECP program participants may implement emergency conservation practices, such as:

- remove debris;
- restore fences and conservation structures; and
- provide water for livestock in drought situations.

Other conservation measures may be authorized by county FSA committees, with approval from state FSA committees and FSA's national office.

Sign-up Periods

Producers should check with their local county FSA offices regarding ECP sign-up periods, which are set by county FSA committees.

For More Information

More information on ECP is available at FSA offices and on FSA's Web site at:

<http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>